

## Public Comment Summary

### 12/15/2011 Citizen Information Meeting

A Citizen Information Meeting (CIM) was held on Thursday, December 15, 2011 for the proposed safety improvement along Route 501 in Campbell and Halifax Counties. The focus of the CIM was to introduce the public to the project and gather input pertaining to the development of improvements along the corridor. Input from the public was gathered through the distribution and completion of Comment Sheets. Residents and property owners located along the project corridor received the Comment Sheet through a direct mailing. Copies of the Comment Sheet were also available at the CIM.

The comments received included specific concerns related to both safety and operations. With regards to operations, a majority of the comments were focused on specific intersections and the need for turning (left and/or right) lanes. Several of the respondents also expressed the need for an occasional third lane to provide an opportunity for passing slower vehicles. Finally a few also expressed a desire to make the corridor 4 lanes. Specific to addressing safety concerns, several locations were identified in which poor sight conditions exist. Also, the need for wider shoulders along the corridor, as well as guardrail at two locations, was mentioned as a way to improve safety.

The Comment Sheet consisted of 6 Questions. The following provides list of all responses received for each of the six questions. In addition, six additional responses were provided in the form of either a letter or phone call. These comments are also provided below.

1. What improvements do you feel are needed to improve traffic flow and safety along Route 501 and at intersecting connections?
  - **Any improvement you can do would be a help.**
  - **Study 17-18 does need improvement. It's a bottleneck area. The residents have limited view to enter 501 from their driveways. It's uphill and this area is very curvy. Very limited view for stopping school busses. Unsafe.**
  - **Passing and turning lanes.**
  - **More aggressive enforcement of speed limits and "following too close" guidelines.**
  - **Straighten the curve at 501 and 650 near Georgia Pacific, the only curve from Gladys to Naruna.**
  - **Turning lanes along Lugardi/501 or center turning lanes.**
  - **Prefer 4 lanes.**
  - **Improve conditions to all or more passing zones. Add center turn lanes at intersection of Route 501/636 Halifax. Add turn lanes at both intersection Routes 645 and 501 Halifax.**
  - **More passing zones and turning lanes.**
  - **Turning lanes at 610 north and south, 641, 628, 621, 603, 645, 621, 40, and 628. Passing lanes in straight sections of Route 581.**
  - **Wider Road, passing lanes.**
  - **Occasional third lane for passing slower vehicles, turn off lanes for major road intersections, guard railing where no shoulders present and 10'+ drop offs.**

- Volens Area – 501 North to turn left onto highway 603, it is hard at night to see when you make the turn if a car is sitting at the stop sign with the lights on (if the part of the highway could be elevated a little).
  - Route 607 and 501 – Hill and curve creates blind spot. 654 and 501 – Hill creates hazard for vehicles turning on 654 northbound.
  - More passing zones, improved visibility with existing passing zones.
  - Turning lanes at some busy intersections, passing lanes, and sight distance improvements in some areas.
  - South of Snyder Jennings, 0.3 miles as you proceed up the hill; that area is nothing but a blind spot. Residents can't see how to pull out of driveways no vertical sight. Bus can't let children off at designed stops.
2. What particular areas have poor sight conditions or turning movements that are difficult or cause you concern? Please describe and provide any suggestions you might have for addressing your concerns.
- I have met over 100 vehicles from Route 917 north to Route 24 around 2pm and after noon a lot of times. That is a lot of traffic.
  - Childrey Creek South 1 mile is very dangerous. I would suggest more lanes to help the traffic flow. In this economy the kind of traffic pattern has changed. More long distance traffic for workers. A lot of trailers pulling scrap iron to Brookneal Recycle for income. More log trucks.
  - The curve at 501 and 650, make it very difficult to pull out of driveway and is dangerous to make a left turn into drive due to curve. The school buses will not pick my children up there.
  - Brookneal-Lusardi Drive along/between R.R. tracks at 40/501 down to Radio Road. Dangerous, numerous crashes? Center turn lane? Maybe that would help. Too many crashes involving vehicles making left turns.
  - In south Brookneal.
  - Improve sight distance Route 615 and 501 Halifax County. Add turn lanes intersection Route 628 and 501 Halifax County and improve vertical alignment south of this intersection.
  - Really agree that money should be spent on road work that has already been identified.
  - Turning or passing lane at 4178 L.P. Bailey highway Halifax. Traffic does not acknowledge vehicle turning into residence. Death of Tyler Hunt.
  - L.P. Bailey Hwy., down below 2065 where the Halifax General Store is; if you are at the green boxes you cannot see traffic coming out of Halifax because of a small knoll.
  - Right turnoff lane would be helpful southbound (in Halifax County) onto Meadville Road. The store at this intersection is very busy and this turn requires a very slow turn onto Meadville Road.
  - 610 Murphy Grove Road – 501 – 610 Wilbourne Road. It's hard to see cars coming up the hill from toward Halifax if you are trying to pull out onto highway 501.
  - 607 – Winfall Road & 654 Marshall Mill. Route 607 and 501 – Hill and curve creates blind spot. 654 and 501 – Hill creates hazard for vehicles turning on 654 northbound

- **501 beginning at Gladys, all the way to Rustburg. Numerous hills and curves along this section.**
  - **Poor sight condition and turning movements at Liberty Mini Market – intersection of Liberty Road and Meadville Road with 501. There have been numerous accidents in this area. Poor sight conditions and turning movements at Millstone Grocery – intersection of Chestnut Road and 501. There have also been several accident in this area. Poor sight condition at the Volens Recycling Center (old Volens Elementary School), when pulling out into 501. Poor sight conditions at intersection of stagecoach Road and Clarkton Road with 501 (Route 40).**
  - **The area I have mentioned in item 1 (south of Sydnor Jennings, 0.3 miles). I would suggest cutting the hill down and building up the bottom area right below the school.**
3. Which of the following best describes your interest in this corridor? (a few respondents checked more than one)
- 8 I own or work at a business on or near the corridor
- 12 I own or rent residential property on or near the corridor
- 10 I am a frequent commuter or user of the corridor
- 1 Other (please specify)
- School Administrator, Halifax County Schools
  - Town Manager – representing our citizens
4. What specific locations do you feel need to be improved? Where and what do you recommend (i.e., passing lanes, passing zones, wider shoulders, additional signage, turn lanes, sight distance improvements)?
- **All of the above.**
  - **Wider Shoulders**
  - **501/Lusardi Drive**
  - **In Brookneal area.**
  - **See 1 above (Improve conditions to all or more passing zones. Add center turn lanes at intersection of Route 501/636 Halifax. Add turn lanes at both intersection Routes 645 and 501 Halifax.) Also add right turn lane at intersection Route 501 and VA 360, town of Halifax.**
  - **All**
  - **Wider shoulders from Southern end (Route 360) to Liberty/Meadville Roads about 10 miles – Dangerous if icy.**
  - **Area near my mother's house, 501 near McKendree Road, there is a passing lane near the auto shop. When I put on my right signal light to turn, cars tends to pass instead of slowing down, there is a small knoll and they are taking a chance because in that short**

- distance it could cause an accident if a car was coming over the knoll in the opposite direction (make it a no passing zone).
- List mailed looks reasonable.
  - Halifax County, intersection of 501, 632 and 40, approaches to 501 from 40 and 632 needs to be offset because this is a very dangerous intersection. Campbell County, guard rail needed on eastern side of road between Rocky Road and Winfall Road at Winfall nursery.
  - More passing lanes are needed to prevent traffic back-ups behind slow moving vehicles which lead to dangerous passing attempts. Turning lanes are needed at the intersection noted above and others. Poor sight condition s needs to be improved by widening shoulders or cutting down trees or embankments at the Volens Recycling Center, intersection of Woodbourne Road with 501, etc. Parking areas at some businesses also causes problems at intersections – Crescent Restaurant, Liberty Mini Market, Millstone Grocery.
  - The area South of Snyder Jennings is the worse spot on the highway.
  - Turn lanes in Brookneal. We need a 3<sup>rd</sup> center lane.
5. As a result of this meeting, do you have a better understanding of the goals of this project and the schedule and plan process? If not, may a representative contact you?
- Please do what you can.
  - Yes, I will help in any way I can.
  - Yes
  - Yes
  - Yes, I have a better understanding. Yes, a representative may cont me if needed but not required.
  - Yes to first part
  - Yes
  - Yes
  - Yes I do! I wish your timeline could be expedited in some way. Thanks for all you do!
  - I understand
6. How did you hear about the meeting? (a few respondents checked more than one)

- 5 Newspaper
- 11 Direct Mail
- 1 VDOT Roadway Signs
- 2 Other (please specify)
  - Variety of meetings I attend
  - I am a member of route 501 Coalition

The following are a list of other comments provided in a different form than the standard Comment Sheet:

- *Phone Conversation with J.T. Davis who is on the Halifax County Transportation Safety Board and will be in attendance at our Feb. 23 501 Coalition meeting.*
  - **He stated that Halifax's top priority would be to improve the intersection of Rte. 501, 40 and 632. That intersection was on our list for you to review for turn lanes, northbound and southbound. He, along with the Head Maintenance person, Kenneth Martin, of the VDOT Halifax Residency, agree that this location should be Halifax County's top priority. They feel the sight distance coming off 632 is poor and stated that an accident occurred this year when a car was hit while crossing 501 coming from 632 to Rte. 40. They have made several suggestions how to improve the intersection as follows: Move stop bar on Rte. 632 six feet closer to Rte. 501, widen the shoulders on the right side of 632 to offset guardrail further from the edge of Rte. 632 pavement, decrease the speed limit on 501, install a flashing light to warn motorist of the intersection, and not allow parking close to rte. 501 at the Crescent Restaurant.**
- *Hand written note from local resident.*
  - **In response to 501 Hwy. (spot improvement project); whatever is safe, I am for it. 501 N. Halifax is a bad turn off. Motorists just pass if you are turning into my house. A question is, if they take my property, do you get paid for it?**
- *Email from R. Lewis Francis, date 12/16/11.*
  - **A turning lane is urgently needed at the intersection of US 501 and 607 (Winfall Road) in Campbell County. The "ahead vision" here is very limited for traffic headed south on 501 such that if a south bound vehicle is making a left turn from 501 to Winfall Road, very often the following vehicle cannot stop in time. If you will check the record for this intersection, you will find a large number of rear-ends. Also, there is almost always skid marks in the road there evidencing near misses. More than once while waiting to turn left, I have aborted my turn and accelerated forward to avoid being rear-ended.**  
  
**Also, left turning traffic entering 501 from Winfall Road have a very limited view of oncoming south bound traffic and even when no vehicles could be seen when entering 501, very frequently, I find, after entering 501 and with optimum acceleration, there is a vehicle right on my bumper with an irate drive. (I do realize a turning lane will not solve this vision problem.)**
- *Letter from John George, Safety Director for Foster Fuels*
  - **Thank you for conducting the Road Improvement Project Citizen Information Meeting at the Brookneal Elementary School on December 15, 2011. I found the meeting to (be) very informative and educational. Your staff did an exceptional presentation of the information.**

I enjoyed speaking with you and Matthew Conner about Foster Fuels safety concerns on entering route 501 at Foster Fuels. Your concern for the public safety was evident during our conversation. Our concern at Foster Fuels is also public safety. Foster Fuels is a family owned business with many ties to the community, all safety issues are major concerns for us, not only to our community family and friends but to our employees. Therefore I would like to list our safety concerns we discussed to be considered by your committee for 501 improvements.

- Caution signs posted north and south of Foster Fuels on route 501 warning drivers of cargo tanks entering the highway containing flammable materials. Foster Fuels has cargo tanks entering route 501 containing gasoline and propane all during the day starting early in the morning.
- Consider changing the passing zone to a no passing zone from route 633 to Grass Street. This would cover the area directly where our vehicles enter route 501.
- Your proposed changes that were posted at the meeting indicated a left turn lane southbound at route 633 (Phelps Creek Rd). We would support this change.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns regarding improvements to route 501, I look forward to attending your spring meeting.

- *Phone Conversation with Ruth Pillow, Campbell County.*
  - She would like to see all funding for this project put towards building 4 lanes in Halifax County since we are not able to perform four lane work in Campbell County. Also, as additional funds are made available addition 4 lane work should be performed in Halifax County.
- *Letter from George Nester, County Administrator, Halifax County (a copy of the accident report referenced in the letter is included as an attachment to this report).*
  - This letter is written to submit additional evidence of the need to improve the intersection of Routes 40, 501, and 632 here in Halifax County. In the letter to me from Mr. Kenneth Martin, the traffic engineering report indicated that VDOT "will still look to widen the northbound shoulder just north of Route 632 and reset the guard rail to improve sight distance since there is a deficiency in sight distance. We will request that this work be done under the 501 corridor improvement project currently underway, however there is no guarantees there will be funding for this improvement. The other improvements that were to be pursued under the HSIP program were based on the notion that there is a deficiency at the intersection and that the improvement would reduce crashes. Since our most recent 3 years of crash data show there has only been 1 crash at the intersection, the justification is not there for implementing these related improvements at this time."

I would like to present information regarding a three vehicle report that occurred on January 3, 2012, the same date that the VDOT Communication was received. I

would like for this Virginia State Police Accident Investigation Report be added to the evidence of why this intersection needs to receive the improvement and upgrades identified in the HSIP.

There is one other bit of information that is vital related to this request. The crash data does not reflect the near misses that have taken place and continue to plague this intersection. Both the Virginia State Police and the Halifax County Sheriff's Office have continued to maintain a more active patrol of this area that has certainly help curtail a number of accidents from occurring.

The Study of the 501 Corridor offers the right tool at the right time to do the right thing to help enhance safety at this location. Therefore, the Board of Supervisors respectfully requests that this intersection be included for improvement as part of the 501 Corridor Project.

Transportation safety is everyone's responsibility. It is the belief that these improvements are necessary to protect lives and property that are continually at risk at this location.

Let me thank you in advance for your cooperation and assistance. I know that you will do what is right and I hope this information will be helpful. Let me know if you require additional information or assistance.

[http://projectcenter.jmt.com/sites/10/10-1579-007/ProjectFiles/00-JMT/11\\_12-15 CIM/501-CIM\\_Meeting Summary.doc](http://projectcenter.jmt.com/sites/10/10-1579-007/ProjectFiles/00-JMT/11_12-15%20CIM/501-CIM_Meeting%20Summary.doc)